# PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, STUDY HABITS AND PARENTING STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG STUDENTS

A

**SYNOPSIS**

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There are many people who may occasionally say, “I will certainly begin next Monday.” They have a tendency to keep postponing their work for a later time. According to Milgram, Mey-Tal and Levision, 1998, “The term procrastinating used for this and similar expressions is defined as procrastinating or postponing tasks and decisions as a typical condition or behavioral characteristic”. While, Dryden, (2000) expressed that “Procrastination is the instance of postponement of the works and assignment that are better to be done today until the following day. Individuals’ postponing their duties and tasks, and not being able to begin a work with the goal of completing, can be regarded among the most typical and frequent incidents of procrastination”.

The term procrastinate comes from the Latin word ‘*procrastinare’* which many researchers such as Burka & Yuen (1983), Milgram, Sroloff, & Rosenbaum (1988) van Eerde, (2003) elucidated that “procrastination can even be distinguished from the intentional delay of a task—because procrastination is unintended—or from logical and essential delay, due to understandable reasons such as illness or technical problems”. It has been reported that procrastination can be either a long-lasting or impermanent behavior where the individual can put off the action, the cognitive output or a decision. In modern times, procrastination is a frequent action (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995; Ferrari, O’Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005). For instance, practically 20% of the adults admit they procrastinate when confronted with routine assignment such as paying bills, paying taxes, or undergoing clinical examinations. These data have been replicated by more current studies, (e.g., Dewitte & Schouwenburg, 2002), which permits us to express that procrastination is a recurrent behavior in present day societies. Senecal, Koestner and Vallerand (1995) elucidated that Procrastination is the universal weakness of individuals and a problem of arranging oneself in this way.

The literature showed that 70% of college students have procrastinating behaviors (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Moreover, academic procrastination can encompass putting off assignments or public speaking until the last minute. This can in turn, lead to a range of adverse effects including; fear, anxiety, stress, worry and low self-esteem (Steel, 2007). However, as some studies recommended, individuals who procrastinate most of the time may have a particular fear or personality attributed to a predisposed thought, emotion, or memory (Steel et al., 2001). Specifically, academic procrastination is a pervasive

and potentially unstable behavior for many university and college students often resulting in feelings of psychological distress (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Academic procrastination which can be named as reflection of daily postponement behavior to school life is defined as postponement of duties and responsibilities related to school, or to wait till the last minute (Haycock, McCarthy, & Skay, 1998). Academic procrastination behavior occurs by not finishing the given assignments and projects or delaying the preparation for examinations (Beck, Koons, & Milgrim, 2000). It has also been observed that such procrastinated behaviors are much more common among the students who graduated from high school and have just entered institution of higher education (Kachgal, Hansen, & Nutter, 2001; Lee, 2005).

Over all viewing the historical perspective, procrastination has been considered as an adverse and objectionable behavior that denotes a lack of moral character and weakness of will (referred to in Greek as "akrasia"; Pychyl, 2011). An additional eastern reference has been offered by the most influential spiritual scripture, The *Bhagavad Gita* (Gandhi, Strohmeier & Nagler, 2000), written during approximately 500 BC. In *Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna* prophesizes that, "Indisciplined, vulgar, stubborn, wicked, malicious, lazy, depressed, and procrastinating; such an agent is called a *Taamasika* agent" (18.28.). It says that, *Taamasika* people are regarded so lowly that refused mortal reincarnation and sent to hell. Procrastination can be considered an almost archetypal human failing given this consistency of thought that stretches thousands of years back, therefore, it is rather surprising and ironic that science did not address procrastination sooner despite being antiquated in origin. These definitions and explanations of procrastination are consistent with contemporary conceptualizations of procrastination which are currently defined as activity that go against one's own better judgment in unnecessarily impeding goal attainment for oneself. Despite a common societal understanding of the general concept of procrastination, there is to date no commonly shared theory of procrastination behavior (van Eerde, 2003).

According to Tuckman (1991), procrastination can be defined as the, "tendency to put off or completely avoid an activity under one's control". However, other authors have defined procrastination as delaying an intended course of action with some researchers further noting that this decision is taken despite knowing that it will lead to undesirable outcomes (Balkis & Duru, 2007;

Pychyl, 2008; Silver & Sabini, 1981). In an attempt to incorporate these varied perspectives, Steel (2007) proposed the now widely-adopted definition of procrastination as the voluntary and needless delay of an intended action, despite inevitable unpleasant/negative consequences. With respect to the academic domain, academic procrastination has been further defined as the irrational predisposition to delay the start and/or completion of an academic task (Senécal, Julian, & Guay, 2003).

Decker (1997) conceptualized psychological distress as lack of motivation , difficulties with sleep (trouble falling asleep or staying asleep), feeling pessimistic or blue, feeling downhearted about the future, feeling emotionally bored and uninterested (for example, crying easily or feeling like crying) or losing interest and attention in things and thoughts of suicide. Mirowsky and Ross (1989) suggest that psychological distress is the unpleasant subjective state of depression and anxiety (being tense, restless, worried irritable and afraid), which has both emotional and psychological manifestations. Further psychological distress is characterized as an emotional disturbance that may impact on the social functioning and day-to-day living of individuals (Wheaton, 2007).

Study habits is a student attitudinal character in adopting a very suitable way to self-sufficiently acquire knowledge based on self-intellectual exploration as a means to develop their intellectual capability, competence and mastery of learnt subject. Study habits is an specified phenomenon which consistently serves as a reinforcing stimulus that helps students not only adapt to the challenges of teaching learning experiences but cope up with them and progress in their pursuit of and attainment of knowledge. Study habits mention to a student's optimistic and positive attitude toward the specific performance of studying and the student's acceptance and approval of the broader goals of college education. In short, study habits of students are determined by student's capacity to manage time, work strategies, attitudes toward teachers and acceptance of education (Crede & Kuncel, 2008). It has been found that Pupils who have worry in university normally do not have adequate study habits that affect their academic achievement positively. A central issue noted was that many of these students had not learned how to take valuable notes and manage time for studying (Mutsotso & Abenga, 2010).

Since children spent most of the time with their parents growing up, parent-child relationship and child rearing practices provides an important foundation for children to learn about self-regulation. Some researchers have pointed out that the behavior of the children is affected by the parent who served as a

role model, instructor and reinforcement of certain behaviors. The finding from various studies showed that majority of the investigators have adapted Baumrind‟s parenting typologies known as authoritarian, authoritative, permissive parenting styles.

The parenting styles frequently used in psychology now a day are based on the effort of Baumrind, a developmental psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, in the 1960s. Maccoby and Martin also contributed by modifying Baumrind's model in the 1980s. According to Baumrind's theory there is a close relationship between the type of parenting styles and children's behavior. Different parenting styles can lead to different child developments and consequences. Based on affective observation, interviews, discussions and analyses, Baumrind primarily identified the following three parenting styles: authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting and permissive parenting. Baumrind observed that preschooler's behavior was highly correlated to a specific kind of parenting style. Later, Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baunrind's 3-parenting-styles model He is using a two-dimensional framework and they extended Baumrind's permissive parenting style into two different types: permissive parenting (also recognized as indulgent parenting style) and neglectful parenting (also recognized as uninvolved parenting style). These four parenting styles are mentioned as the Baumrind parenting styles or Maccoby and Martin parenting styles. Hence the four parenting styles are based on the different combinations of the above three aspects.

**The authoritative style** includes high warmth and control as well as autonomy granting. The authoritative parents inspire their adolescent to be independent while maintaining parameters and controls on their actions. They involve in discussions when a decision is to be taken and consider the adolescent's viewpoint, although the ultimate responsibility resides with the parents. Throughout childhood and adolescence, authoritative parenting is related with the development of competence, responsibility and autonomy which leads to high self-esteem, social and moral maturity, etc. (Berk, 2007). **The authoritarian style** includes less warmth, higher controlling traits and low autonomy granting. Such authoritarian style parents are rigid in disciplinarians, use a restrictive, follow punitive style, and insist that their adolescent to follow parental directions (Kopko, 2007). They appear cold and rejecting, do not engage into discussions with their teens and value strict discipline over independent behavior. Children of authoritarian parents may be suffer from such kind of behavior like

anxious, apprehensive and unhappy, have low self-esteem and may become very rebellious nature or dependent as they reach adolescence. **The permissive style** includes high warmth but less control and instead of granting autonomy, they permit children to allow take decisions for themselves even when they are incapable of doing so. They are tolerant and not exceptionally active in their parenting, and believe that the way to illustrate their love is to give in to their adolescent's wishes (Kopko, 2007). As consequences, the children may become impulsive, disobedient, demanding and rebellious. **The uninvolved style** involve less warmth, little control and lack of interest towards granting autonomy. These parents are unconcerned about child rearing, too busy in their own stresses to spend time and vitality for their children (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). They may respond to the demands of accessible objects made by the children, but lack any parenting strategies, such as control, discipline, interaction, listening, guidance and expressing love and care. Children of such parents generally display poor emotional self-regulation, difficulties in academic performance, and antisocial behavior (Berk, 2007).

Darling and Steinberg (1993) proposed that parenting style is a global climate in which a family functions and in which childrearing takes place. Most of the research on parenting is based on the landmark series of studies conducted by Baumrind, who gathered information on child rearing by watching parents, interact with their preschoolers (Baumrind, 1971a; Baumrind & Black, 1967). Baumrind's findings resulted into the conceptualization of four parenting styles, originally based on two aspects of parental behaviors: parental warmth and parental control. Parental control (also known as parental demandingness; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) refers to the degree to which parents oversee their children's behavior—from being exceptionally supervisory to setting few rulebooks and demands (Kopko, 2007). This generally promotes maturity in the behavior of the child (Berk, 2007). Parental warmness also known as parental responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) denotes to the degree to which parents are accepting and responsive of their children's behavior as opposed to being unresponsive, refusing and rejecting (Kopko, 2007).

**JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Procrastination is a behavioral propensity with potentially damaging consequences for the individual suffering from it. The most typical characteristic of Procrastination is underperformance: because of their tendency to start late, procrastinators do not have enough time to perform at the level their

abilities would allow. Some procrastinators, cause emotional troubles and the characteristics of procrastinators seem to be worrying about their dilatory behavior. This very worrying makes them feel bad, which might trigger the urge to relieve tension and give in to temptations. Students who procrastinate replying to their academic responsibility could be prone to poor study habit as they might find it problematic to plan their activities, manage their time, develop correct time table to study or manage a productive balance between their academic and socio-personal life activities. When students constantly procrastinate and include in poor study habit, they tend to lose concentration and focus, ill-motivated to excel academically and could express anxiety while studying or sitting for examinations. They could also develop negative self-verbalization helplessness and poor academic performance that could put them at academic risk and this reflect the character of some secondary school students.

It's more than one year now that due to the pandemic, the method of teaching has shifted from classroom to virtual mode. Students are interaction more with their parents than before. Also there has been a lot of fretfulness, anxiety, fear, uncertainty and insecurity fallen on everyone especially children. This motivated the researcher to explore the above mentioned variables which might play an important role in students' academic procrastinated behavior in context to present scenario.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Peixoto, et al. (2021)** examined and found that procrastination is a maladaptive behavior experienced by students in academic activities due to which they face negative consequences leading to poor mental health. The spread of COVID-19 as a pandemic lead to very challenging condition of students in relation to their academic activity and it increased procrastinated behavior in their academic tasks and activities and achievers did not enjoy this period. The researchers tested an integrative model of passion, procrastination, satisfaction with life and psychological distress in pupils during COVID- 19 pandemic. The sample consisted of 416 college students between the age group of 18-57 years. The results revealed that academic procrastination is negatively related to the harmonious passion, obsessive passion is positively related to academic procrastination and academic procrastination is negatively linked to the satisfaction to life and positively related to the psychological distress. These results indicate that harmonious passion plays a defensive role against academic procrastination and mental health indicators, while obsessive passion signifies a risk factor for mental health.

A study was done by **García et al. (2020) to** investigated the relationship of Academic procrastination and study habits and self- reported executive function on high school students with a sample of 52 school students. The above stated variables were measured by the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), Study Habits Inventory (SHI), Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF®) and anxiety was measured using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) respectively. The results showed that high school students had moderate procrastination scores that were negatively correlated with the SHI scores and significant correlation was found between the APS and this scale was associated with the Metacognition Index (MI) as measured by BRIEF®. It was revealed that students who are having procrastination behavior, that individual facing such kind of difficulty to organizing, planning and assimilating school content.

**Bojuwoye (2019)** investigated the causes of academic procrastination by pupils with learning disabilities in the secondary schools of Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. In this study investigator gathered valuable information from the participants by structured questionnaire consisting of different factors which were responsible for procrastination. Results revealed that indecision, time management, lack of motivation, fear of failure, poor organizational skills, high stress, poor coping strategies and peer influence, in that descending order of importance or precedence, were considered by participants as causes for their academic procrastination. Results also showed gender differences in the causes of academic procrastination considered by the respondents.

**Anwar and Qonita (2019)** investigated the relationship of the parent's hope and academic procrastination of college students .In this research 344 university students using quota sampling method were selected. The research design used was quantitative non-experimental design to measure parents' hope and academic procrastination. The result of the research revealed that there was negative and significant relation between parents' hope and academic procrastination. It meant that the extreme parents' hope, the lower academic procrastination is found.

**Another study by Saplavska and Jerkunkova (2018)** revealed that Procrastination is a complex, psychologically heterogeneous phenomenon that includes behavioral, emotional and cognitive components. Academic procrastination means that there is a delay in the completion of educational assignments and is associated with undeveloped learning skills, lack of organization, forgetfulness,

and behavioral rigidity. The consequences of this behavior demonstrate decrease in academic achievement, negative emotional experiences related to own failure, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with the results and the Procrastination behavior give negatively and adversely affects on the psychological well-being of the students; therefore, this phenomenon is of special interest in the context of future specialists training. Hence, the researchers investigated the link between academic procrastination and anxiety among students aged 20-27years. The members were 60 second year students chosen from the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Faculty of Engineering. The Procrastination Scale was used to measure academic procrastination; State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Form Y) was implemented to investigate anxiety and the results revealed that 48 % of the participants demonstrated a high level of academic procrastination, 27 % showed medium and 25 % showed low academic procrastination. The results also revealed that when the situational and personal anxiety increased, the level of academic procrastination also increased. It was proposed that the balanced workload distribution and an encouraging learning atmosphere will reduce the level of academic procrastination among students.

**He, S. (2017)** conducted a study on the academic procrastination among students in the university of Bristol and tried to discovered the occurrence of academic procrastination, the reasons that render procrastinated behaviors of university students, and the psychological influence that are triggered by procrastination. The study had 201 participants from different ages, educational levels and country background. Their findings showed that 97% applicants are affected by different effects of procrastination, 48% students “very often” or “always” procrastinate. Idleness, ill-motivation, stress, using internet too much and facing difficulty to complete tasks are the key points to identify the reasons for academic procrastination. Over 80% of the students suffer from anxiety when they procrastinate.

**Mahasneh et al. (2016)** expressed that the relationship between academic procrastination and parenting styles among Jordanian Undergraduate University Students with a sample of 685 male and female undergraduate university students who was chosen from many different faculties at the Hashemite University and the participant of this sample were administrated by two questionnaires academic procrastination and parenting styles during the academic year 2013/2014. Results stated that

there were few students (7%) who showed a high level of academic procrastination, over half of the students (67%) resulted a moderate level and nearly a quarter of students (26%) demonstrated a low level of academic procrastination, while, there was no significant differences seen between male and female in academic procrastination scores. After reviewing the final results it was found that there is a significant positive correlation between academic procrastination and parenting styles.

**Reynolds (2015)** assessed the relationship of the locus of control, parenting styles, academic procrastination and economic independences on a sample of 61(39 females, 21 males, 1 other) undergraduate students who fulfilled the demographics, locus of control, parenting style, and academic procrastination measures. The researcher found that there was a significant positive correlation between higher scores on the Parental Authority Questionnaire authoritative scale and the Procrastination Assessment Scale scores. This study also revealed that a significant negative correlation exists between the authoritarian and authoritative parenting style scores for those who were economically dependent.

**Sunitha and Musthafa (2013)** examined the relationship between Academic Procrastination and Mathematics Anxiety among Secondary School Students. The participants of the study were 352 secondary school students of Kerala. The researchers expressed a significant relationship between academic procrastination and mathematics for entire sample and subsamples based on gender.

The study by **Schiming (2012)** examined that certain demographics and academic characteristics have an impact on the academic procrastination by university students from one of the macroeconomics courses. The study dealt with an objective measure of academic procrastination (homework initiation) rather than the self-reported measures commonly observed in the literature. The empirical results revealed that students who do less procrastination behavior are strong academically, non-traditionally aged, or had a previous college level course in economics. Upper level students tend to do more procrastination behavior. There was a variation in students' academic procrastination but, procrastination is usually worsened as the academic term progressed.

**Ozer and Sackes (2011)** examined the outcome of procrastination on students' life satisfaction among a group of university students. A sample of 314 college students (214 female, 100 male) was administrated Procrastination Scale by Tuckman and Life Satisfaction scale. The age range of students

was between 17- 27 years. The average age of the participants was 20.76 (SD=1.97). The results of the preliminary analysis expressed that 38% (119) of the students appeared to be regular procrastinators, with male students reported more frequent procrastination than female students. The results of the descriptive statistics expressed that the overall mean of the sample was 37.8. A total of 118 out of 314 applicants (38%) scored high on procrastination scale, based on the median split criteria. So, 38% of the applicants were reported to be regular procrastinator.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The present study will explore the relationship between Psychological distress, parenting style, study habits and academic procrastination. It will also study the relative contribution of Psychological distress, study habits and parenting style in the determination of academic procrastination.

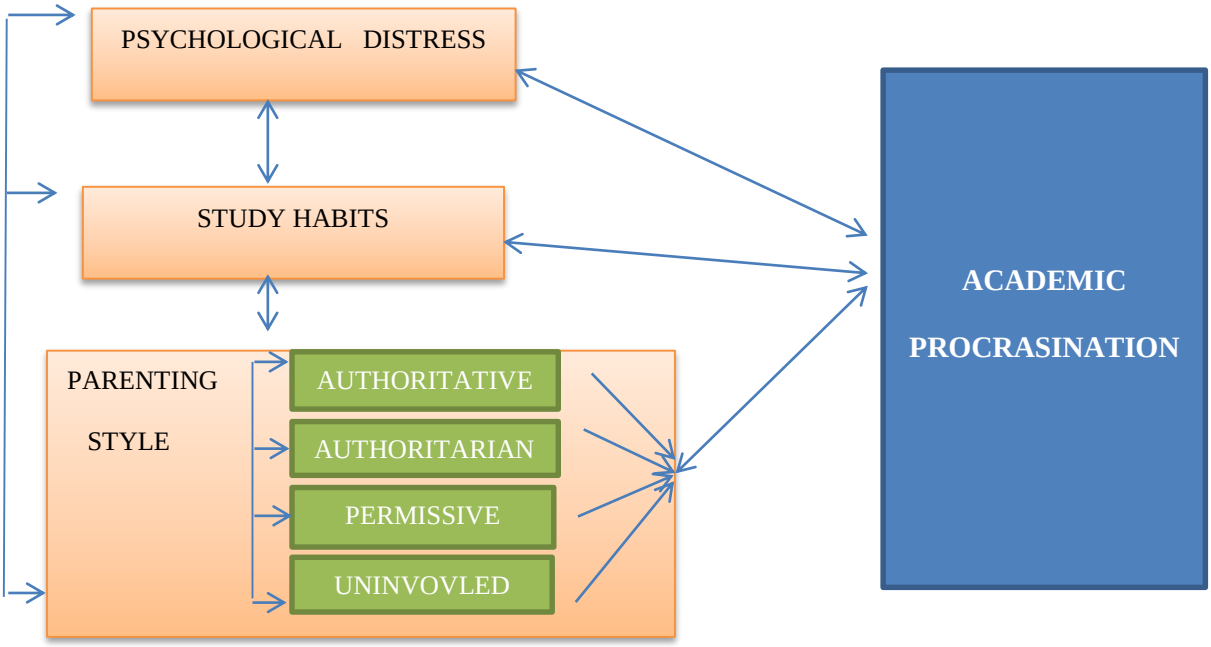


**Figure 1 Conceptual Framework**

## METHOD

**AIM**

The aim of the present research is to investigate the relationship of psychological distress, study habits and parenting style as predictors of academic procrastination among school students.

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED**

- **Academic Procrastination-**

**A**cademic procrastination is well-defined as, "an irrational tendency to delay, postponement at the beginning or completion of an academic assignment" (Senécal, Julian, & Guay, 2003).

- **Psychological Distress-**

  It is a set of painful mental and physical symptoms that are co-related with ordinary fluctuations of mood in most individuals.

- **Study Habits-**

  The student's adopted the technique of planning his study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient etc. Good study habits are good advantage to learners because they ensure brilliant performance, while the opposite becomes constraint to learning and achievement, leading to failure.

- **Parenting Style-**

  Parenting Style is the child rearing practice that parents adopt to raise their children which directly influences their behavior.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To study the relationship of psychological distress and academic procrastination.
- To study the relationship of study habits and academic procrastination.
- To study the relationship of parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved) and academic procrastination.
- To study the relationship of psychological distress and study habits.
- To study the relationship of psychological distress and parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved).
- To study the relationship of study habits (poor / good) and parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved).
- To study the relative contribution of psychological distress, study habits and parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved) on academic procrastination.

## HYPOTHESES

- There would be a positive relationship between psychological distress and academic procrastination.
- There would be a positive relationship between poor study habits and academic procrastination.
- There would be a positive relationship between Autocratic, Permissive, uninvolved parenting styles and academic procrastination respectively.
- There would be a negative relationship between Democratic parenting style and academic procrastination.
- There would be a positive relationship between psychological distress and poor study habits.
- There would be a positive relationship between psychological distress and parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved).
- There would be a significant relationship between (poor / good) study habits and parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved).
- Psychological distress, Poor Study habits and Parenting styles (Democratic, Autocratic, Permissive, Uninvolved) would have significant contribution in the determination of academic procrastination.

## VARIABLES

### Predictor Variables

- ✓ Psychological Distress
- ✓ Study Habits
- ✓ Parenting Styles
    - ❖ Democratic
    - ❖ Autocratic
    - ❖ Permissive
    - ❖ Uninvolved

**Criterion Variable**

- ✓ Academic procrastination

**Relevant Variables**

- ✓ Educational Qualification- 11th and 12th standard students will be selected for the sample
- ✓ Age- Between 15 to18 years
- ✓ Gender- Both Boys and Girls will be included in the sample

**SAMPLE**

In the present study, a sample of 300 students from 11th and 12th standard (150 boys and 150 girls) belonging to an age range of 15 to 18 years would be selected through convenient sampling technique.

**Inclusion Criteria**

- ✓ Students from Nuclear family would be only considered
- ✓ Schools from Urban areas of Agra district would be only selected
- ✓ Students should be from CBSE and U.P. Board
- ✓ Students from any stream (Arts/Science/Commerce) would be included in the sample
- ✓ Parents should be at least 10th standard pass
- ✓ Both their Parents should be alive

**Exclusion Criteria**

- ✓ Students from joint family would be excluded
- ✓ Students from rural schools would not be selected for the sample
- ✓ Students from outside Agra district would be excluded
- ✓ Students whose parents are below 10th standard would be excluded from the sample
- ✓ Students raised by single parent would not be considered

**TOOLS**

- **Academic Procrastination-**

  Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) developed by Kalia, A. K. and Yadav, M. (2015) will be used. It is a likert type five point scale. The APS contains total 25 items with the different four dimensions such as firstly procrastination in homework (10 items), secondly procrastination in preparation for examination (6 items), thirdly procrastination in project

work (5 items) and the last, procrastination in co-curricular activities (4 items). Out of these total 25 items, 16 items are positive and 9 items are negative. The reliability test - retest coefficient was .843 and Guttman‟s Split Half Coefficient was .713. Face validity and content validity of the APS was adopted.

- **Psychological Distress-**

  The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) developed by Kessler & Mroczek (1992) will be used to measure the level of psychological distress. The K10 scale includes 10 questions about emotional states each with a five-level response scale. The measure can be used as a brief screen to identify levels of distress. It is a moderately reliable instrument with kappa and weighted kappa scores ranging from 0.42- 0.74. The tool has been validated to screen for common mental disorders in 26 developing countries including India.

- **Study Habits-**

  **Study Habit Scale** (SHS–DRMJ) developed by Rani and Jaidka (2015) will be used. The purpose of the scale was to assess the study habits of students. In this scale there is no right and wrong answer. This scale consists of 46 items divided into seven dimensions–

  i. Concentration ii. Comprehension iii. Planning, iv. Use of e-resources, v. Interaction, vi. Study Sets, vii. Drilling. The responses on the scale are to be given on a five point alternative (Likert Type). The split-half method was used to test the reliability of the scale. The coefficient of correlation between odd items and even items was found to be 0.872 which is significant at.01 level of significance. The major types of validity measured are content validity and construct validity. It was administered on 200 adolescent students of class X, XI, XII. The scale is very useful to determine the study habits of adolescents and also helps the teachers as well as students in selection of good study habits.

- **Parenting Styles-**

  Parenting Style Scale developed by Gupta and Mehtani (2017) will be used to measure the parenting styles. This scale consists of 44 statements to measure the four types of parenting style (Democratic, autocratic, permissive and uninvolved).Test-retest reliability of the scale is

0.911 and spilt-half reliability is 0.795. The scale has high construct validity which ranged from 0.508 to 0.819.

**DESIGN**

Correlation Design will be used.

**STATISTCAL ANALYSIS**

Multiple regression analysis will be used to statistically treat the data.

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